

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



23

DEC

02449

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI,

MASTER OF KUNG FU



TM

TM

MARTIAL-ARTS
ACTION
IN THE MIGHTY
MARVEL
MANNER!



DOOMS WAIT FOR SHANG-CHI...
IN THE **RIVER OF
DEATH!**

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: That my name means "The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit," that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu, and that it might be used for the murder of a man called Dr. Petrie.

"Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu** the most insidiously evil man on earth... and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my *name*."

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!™

RIVER OF DEATH!

"THE NIGHT FAILS TO SOOTHE MY TROUBLED THOUGHTS."

"MY EYES CROSS WATER TO THE GIFT OF A SYMBOL."

"IT IS A STATUE WHICH REPRESENTS FREEDOM WON AT THE COST OF DEATH..."

"...AND WHILE MY STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY RENDER SUCH A CONCEPT FALSE, MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE NATURE OF MAN DICTATES THAT FALLACY IS OFTEN TRUTH."

"THUS, LIBERTY BECOMES THE REWARD OF BATTLE... WHETHER AGAINST A LEAGUE OF NATIONS..."

"...OR THE UPRaised HAND OF A SINGLE MAN."

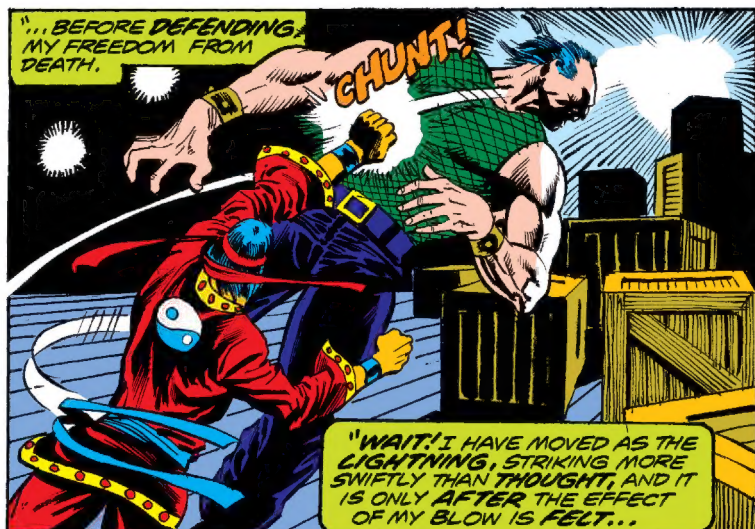
DOUG MOENCH AL MILGROM E. K. JANSON
WRITER ARTISTS

JOHN COSTANZA L. LESSMANN ROY THOMAS
letterer colorist editor



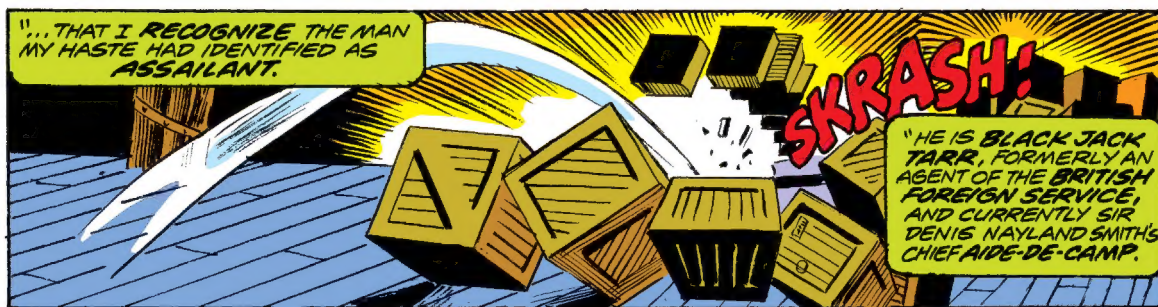
"THE HAND TOUCHES MY SHOULDER LONG MOMENTS AFTER I HAVE HEARD ITS APPROACH."

"BUT I HAVE WAITED AS LONG AS POSSIBLE..."



"... BEFORE DEFENDING, MY FREEDOM FROM DEATH."

"WAIT! I HAVE MOVED AS THE LIGHTNING, STRIKING MORE SWIFTLY THAN THOUGHT, AND IT IS ONLY AFTER THE EFFECT OF MY BLOW IS FELT..."



"... THAT I RECOGNIZE THE MAN MY HASTE HAD IDENTIFIED AS ASSAILANT."

"HE IS **BLACK JACK TARR**, FORMERLY AN AGENT OF THE **BRITISH FOREIGN SERVICE**, AND CURRENTLY SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH'S CHIEF AIDE-DE-CAMP."



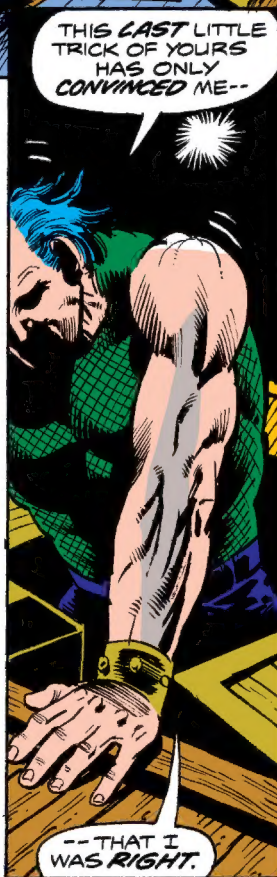
THAT DOES IT, CHINAMAN--!

SIR DENIS IS AN OLD MATE OF MINE, AND UP UNTIL NOW I'VE RESPECTED HIS WISHES THAT I PLAY CRICKET WITH YOU...



BUT YOU'RE STILL FU MANCHU'S SON--

--AND I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN YOU'D NEVER CHANGE.



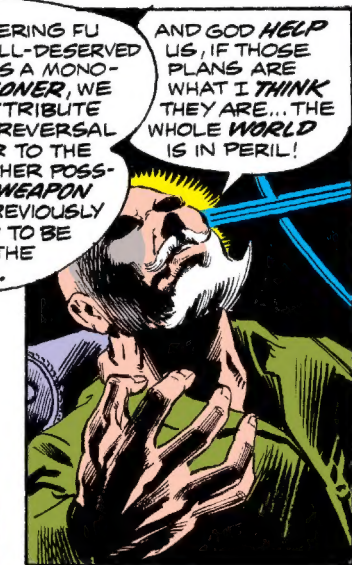
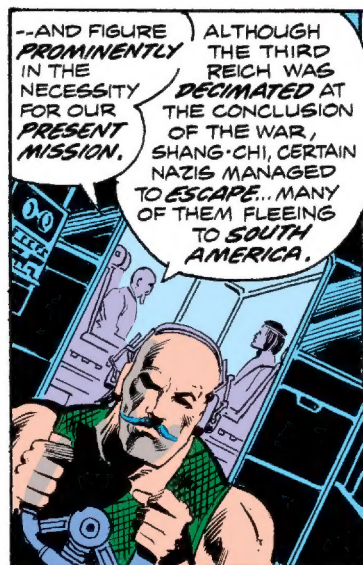
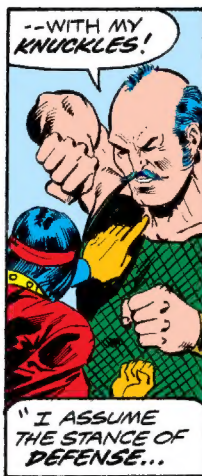
THIS LAST LITTLE TRICK OF YOURS HAS ONLY CONVINCED ME--

-- THAT I WAS RIGHT.



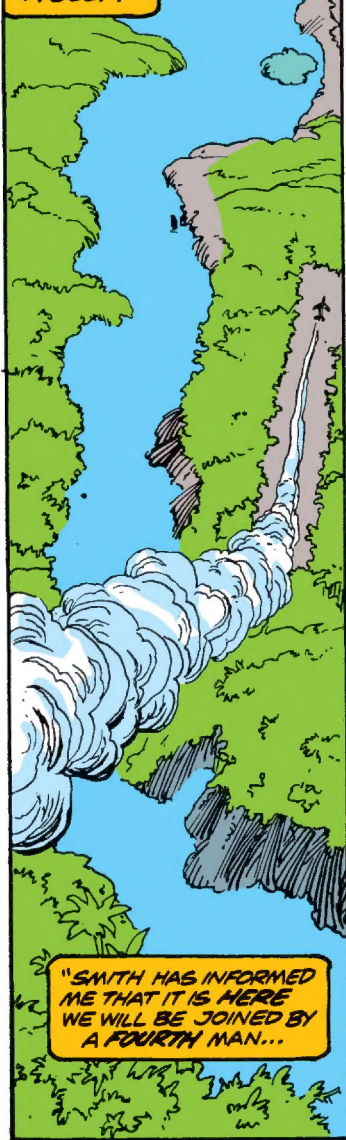
YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME, SHANG-CHI...

...AND OLD **BLACK JACK** IS JUST THE BLOKE TO PUT YOU BACK IN YOUR PROPER PLACE.



"SMITH'S PLANE REACHES A LOCATION DEEP WITHIN THIS COUNTRY'S BEAUTIFUL TERRAIN. THE AMAZON RIVER TWISTS THROUGH THE DENSE RAIN FORESTS BELOW US..."

"...AND WE DESCEND TO A CRUDE LANDING STRIP CUT FROM THE JUNGLE ITSELF."



"SMITH HAS INFORMED ME THAT IT IS HERE WE WILL BE JOINED BY A FOURTH MAN..."



LET'S HOPE OUR LIAISON AGENT HAS THE LAUNCH PREPARED FOR US.



HELLO--! I'M NAYLAND SMITH... AND YOU, I PRESUME, ARE RAYMOND STRAWN.

THAT'S RIGHT-- I'M STRAWN...

...AND YOU'RE MORE THAN TWO HOURS LATE!! BASED ON THE CALCULATIONS YOU RADIOED TO ME, THAT PUTS FU MANCHU SEVEN HOURS AHEAD OF US--!



NOW-- SINCE I'VE ALREADY LOADED THIS SCOW MYSELF...



...I'M ADVISING YOU TO GET YOUR TAILS ABOARD FAST-- BEFORE I DECIDE TO MAN IT MYSELF.

THAT STINKING YELLOW SCUM ISN'T GOING TO WAIT FOR US.

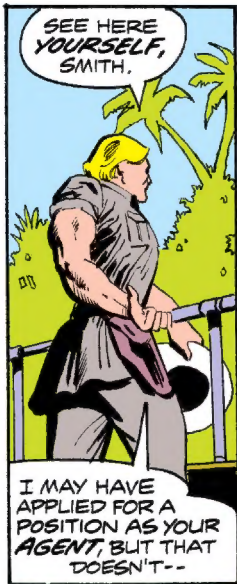


"IT IS CLEAR--"



--THAT HE HAS NOT YET SEEN ME.

SEE HERE, STRAWN, I--

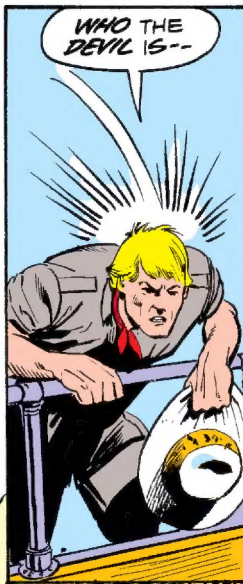


SEE HERE YOURSELF, SMITH.

I MAY HAVE APPLIED FOR A POSITION AS YOUR AGENT, BUT THAT DOESN'T--



WHAT--?!



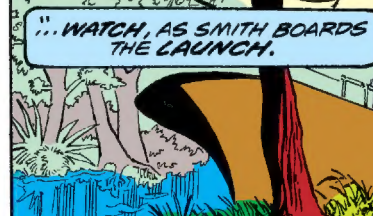
WHO THE DEVIL IS--



--THAT?!!



"I...



...WATCH, AS SMITH BOARDS THE LAUNCH.

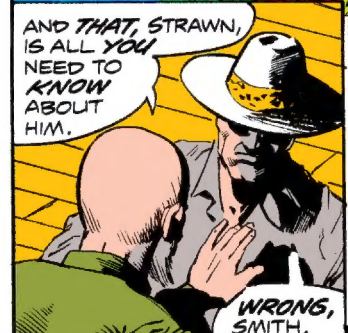


THAT, STRAWN... IS SHANG-CHI.

HE IS A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN INVALUABLE TO ME ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS.

HE IS THE ONE PERSON MORE EQUIPPED FOR THIS MISSION THAN ANY I CAN IMAGINE.

AND HE IS A TRUSTED FRIEND.



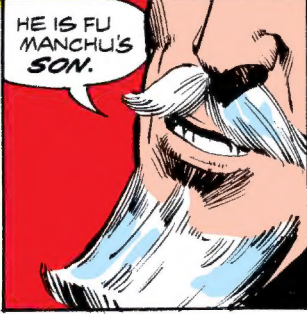
AND THAT, STRAWN, IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIM.

WRONG, SMITH.



I CAN SEE WHAT I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIM. AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO SHARE THIS BOAT WITH HIS LIKES.

JUST WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS ANYWAY?!



HE IS FU MANCHU'S SON.



HE'S... WHAT--?!

ARE YOU INSANE?!



YOU WANT TO BRING THAT YELLOW FILTH'S SON WITH US?!

I WON'T ALLOW IT! I WON'T TOLERATE IT--!

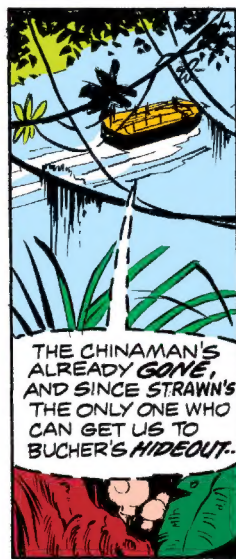
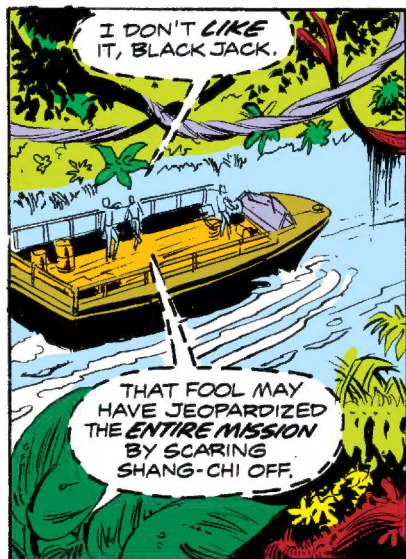


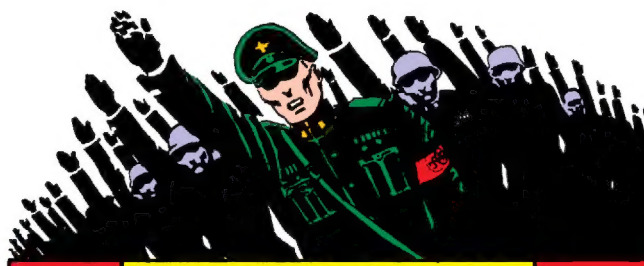
I SAY YOU WILL TOLERATE IT.

AND I ALSO SAY YOU'LL SHUT UP-- RIGHT NOW!

WH-WHO...?

BLACK JACK TARR, DON'T FORGET IT.



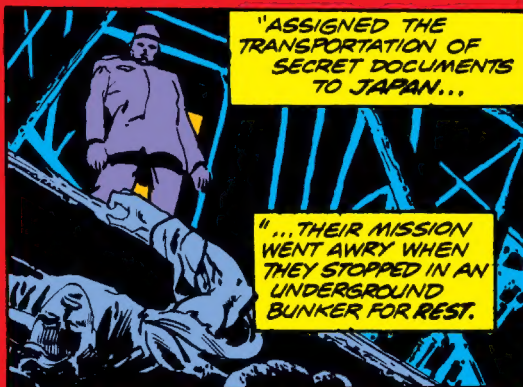


"... FOR WILHELM BUCHER WAS PERHAPS THE MOST LOYAL OFFICER IN THE ENTIRE THIRD REICH, AS WELL AS A FOREMOST AND FANATICAL ADHERENT TO THE FUHRER'S ABHORRENT 'MASTER RACE' POGROM. INDEED, BUCHER'S HATRED FOR THE SO-CALLED 'INFERIOR' RACES MAY HAVE EXCEEDED HITLER'S OWN..."

"...AS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS VOCAL DISSENTION TO GERMANY'S ALLIANCE WITH JAPAN, NOTHING SHORT OF HITLER'S PERSONAL ORDERS--



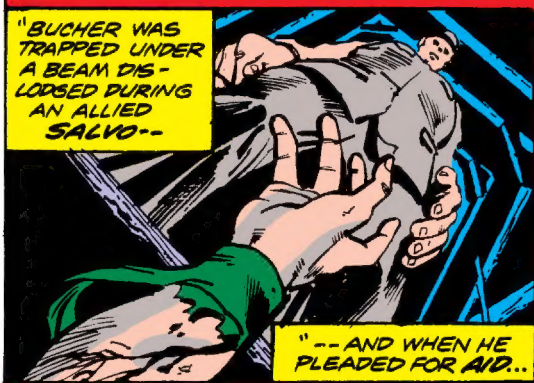
"--COULD HAVE FORCED BUCHER TO ACCEPT A JAPANESE AS HIS SOLE ASSISTANT IN AN UNDER-COVER MISSION.



"ASSIGNED THE TRANSPORTATION OF SECRET DOCUMENTS TO JAPAN..."

"...THEIR MISSION WENT AWRY WHEN THEY STOPPED IN AN UNDERGROUND BUNKER FOR REST.

"BUCHER WAS TRAPPED UNDER A BEAM DISLODGED DURING AN ALLIED SALVO--



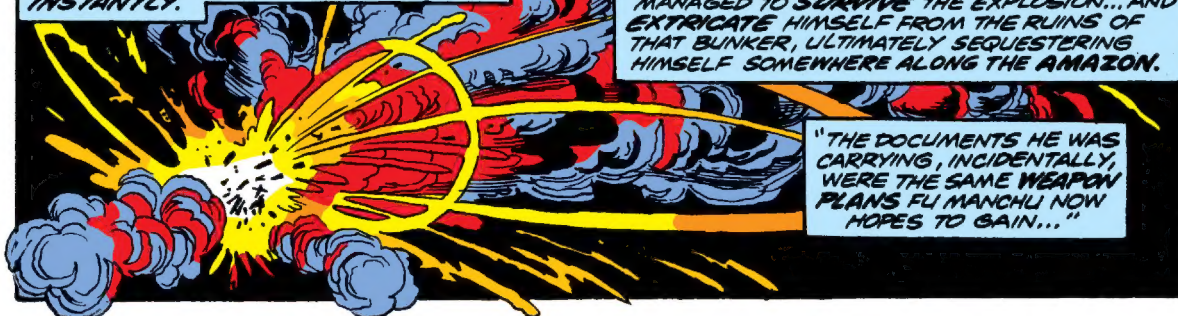
"-- AND WHEN HE PLEADED FOR AID..."

"...THE JAPANESE OFFICER MERELY FLED..."



"...LIVING TO TELL THE STORY I'M NOW TELLING YOU.

"A SECOND BARRAGE OF MORTAR SHELLING WAS UNLEASHED MOMENTS LATER, PRESUMABLY KILLING BUCHER INSTANTLY.



"HOWEVER, WE NOW KNOW THAT HE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SURVIVE THE EXPLOSION... AND EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM THE RUINS OF THAT BUNKER, ULTIMATELY SEQUESTERING HIMSELF SOMEWHERE ALONG THE AMAZON.

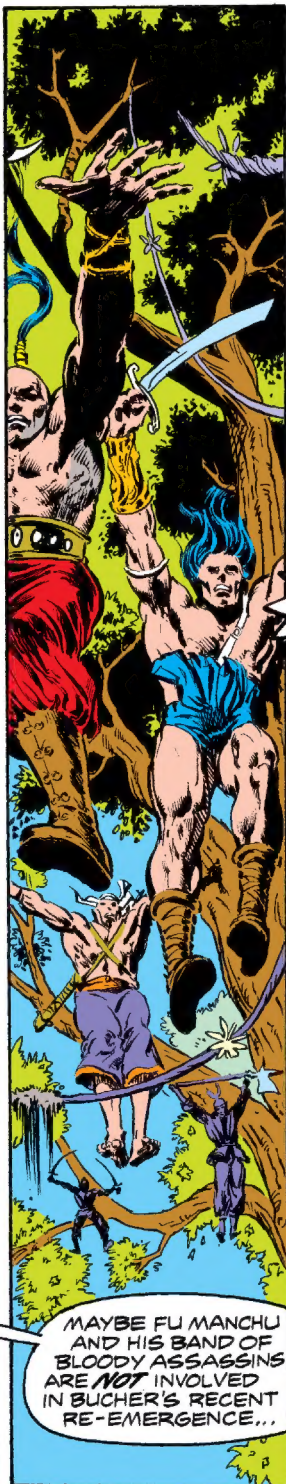
"THE DOCUMENTS HE WAS CARRYING, INCIDENTALLY, WERE THE SAME WEAPON PLANS FU MANCHU NOW HOPES TO GAIN..."

BUT I'M SURE YOU SEE WHAT I'M **GETTING** AT, BLACK JACK. GIVEN BUCHER'S FIERCE HATRED OF ALL **NON-ARYAN RACES**, AND THE FACT THAT A **JAPANESE** ENACTED WHAT IS CERTAIN TO BE TANTAMOUNT TO **TREACHERY** IN HIS MIND--

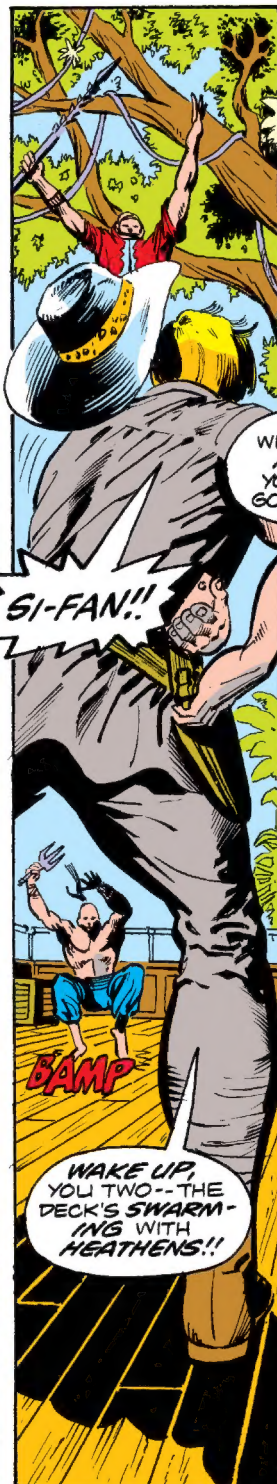
--THE VERY ACT OF **CONSOLIDATING** WITH AN ORIENTAL-- EVEN A **CHINESE** LIKE FU MANCHU-- WOULD SEEM **INIMICAL** TO THE VERY FOUNDATIONS TO HIS TWISTED **PRINCIPLES**.



THEN MAYBE OUR INFORMATION IS FAULTY, SIR DENIS...



MAYBE FU MANCHU AND HIS BAND OF BLOODY ASSASSINS ARE **NOT** INVOLVED IN BUCHER'S RECENT RE-EMERGENCE...



SI-FAN!!

BAMP

WAKE UP, YOU TWO--THE DECK'S SWARMING WITH HEATHENS!!



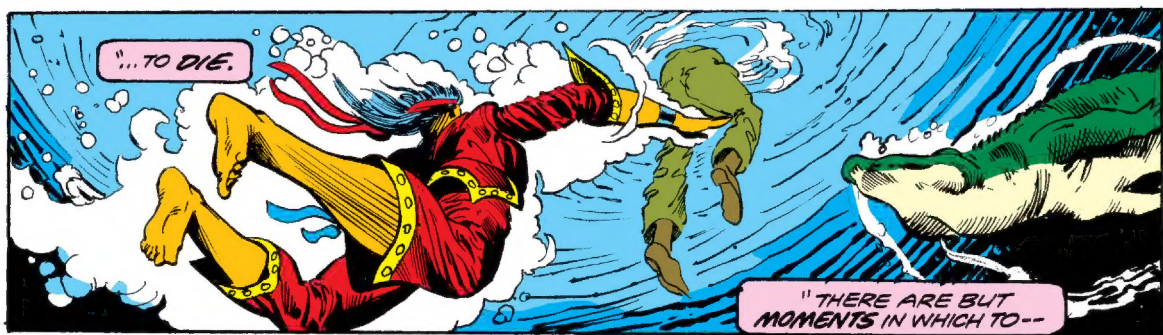
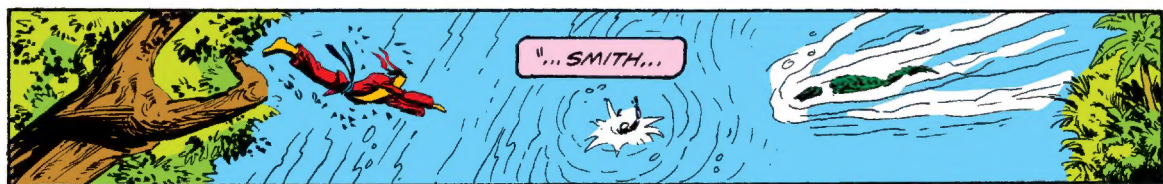
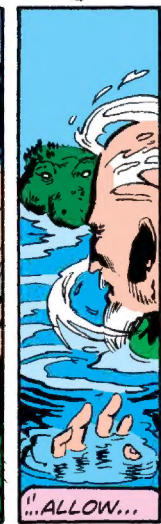
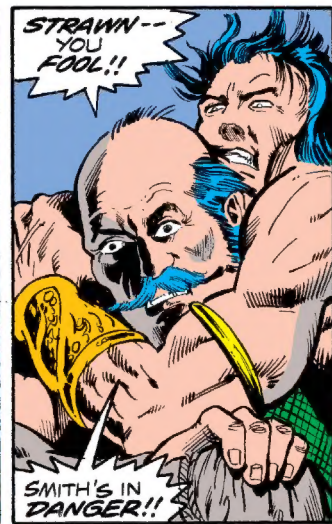
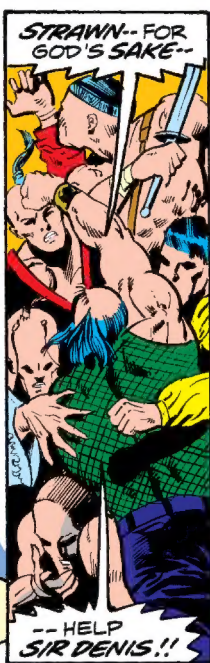
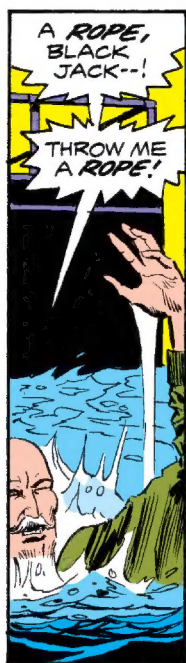
WE'RE AWAKE, STRAWN...

...BUT I WISH THAT BIG MOUTH OF YOURS WOULD GO TO SLEEP.

SWOX

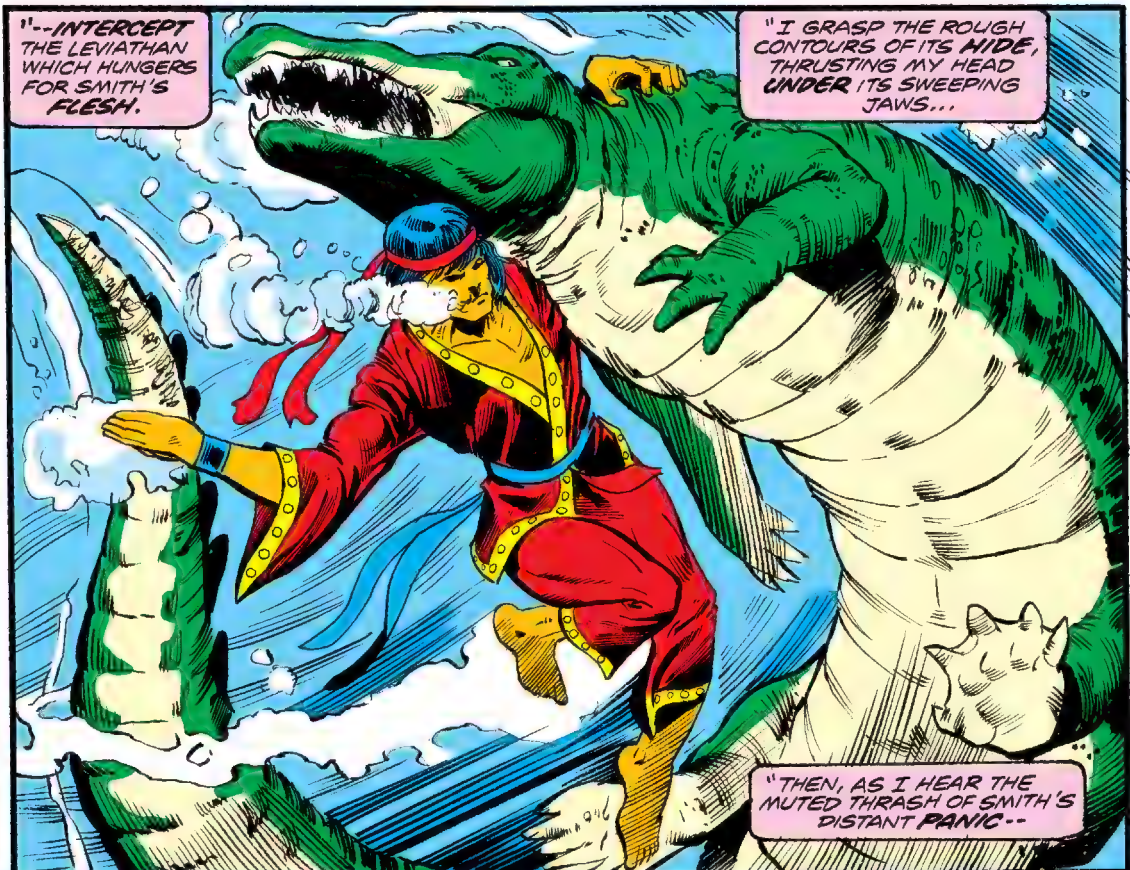
THUD

BLACK JACK--! LOOK OUT--!



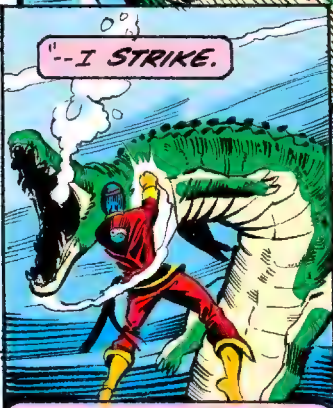
"--INTERCEPT
THE LEVIATHAN
WHICH HUNGERS
FOR SMITH'S
FLESH.

"I GRASP THE ROUGH
CONTOURS OF ITS *HIDE*,
THRUSTING MY HEAD
UNDER ITS SWEEPING
JAWS...



"THEN, AS I HEAR THE
MUTED THRASH OF SMITH'S
DISTANT PANIC--

"--I STRIKE.

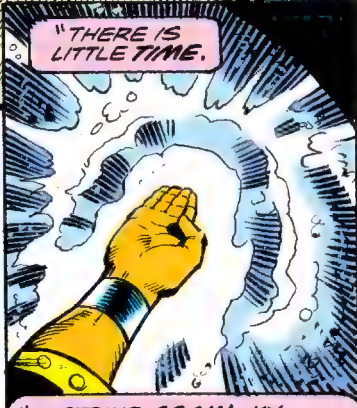


"BUT THE WATER HAS
DROWNED THE *STRENGTH*
OF MY BLOW...

"...WEAKENED
IT TO THE
STING OF A
NOISOME
INSECT.

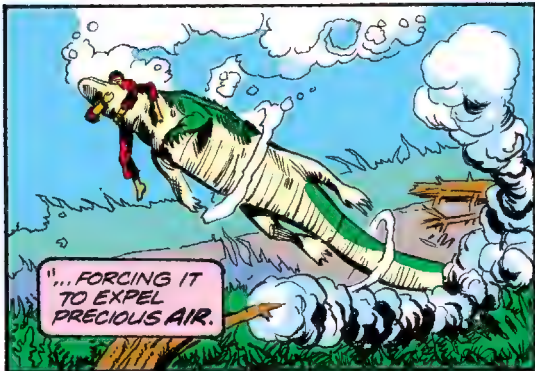


"THERE IS
LITTLE TIME.

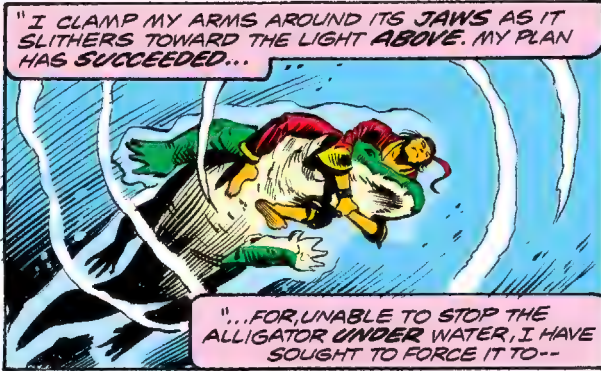


"I STRIKE AGAIN, MY
FINGERS GOUGING DEEPLY INTO
THE REPTILE'S SOFT *UNDERBELLY*...

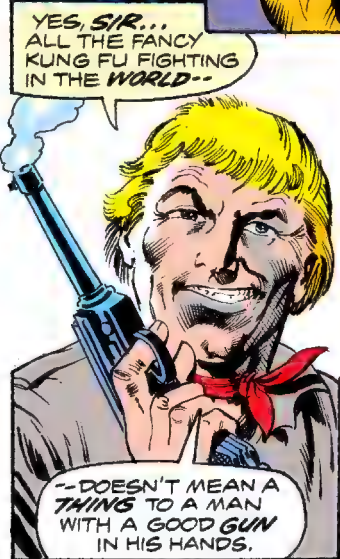
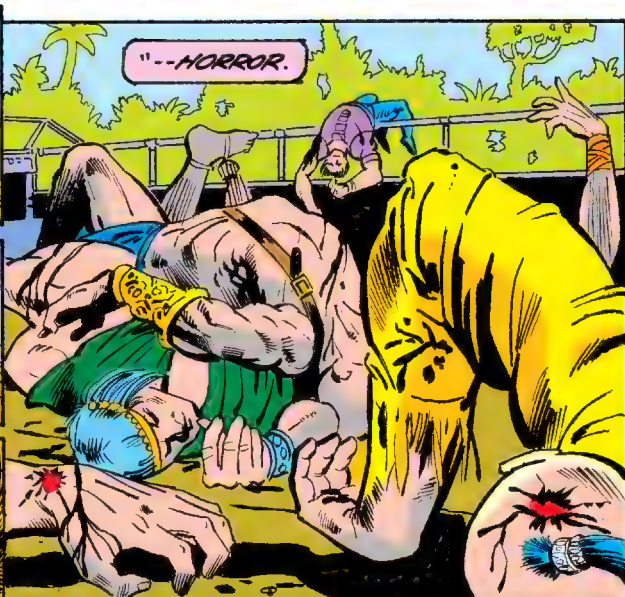
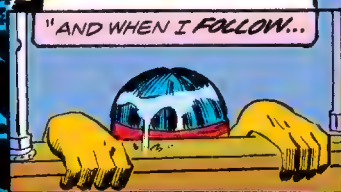
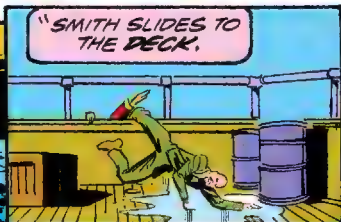
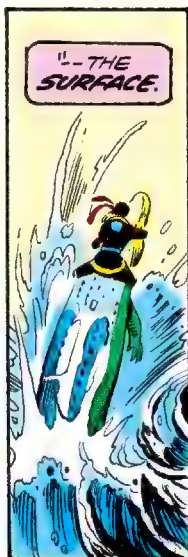
"I CLAMP MY ARMS AROUND ITS *JAWS* AS IT
SLITHERS TOWARD THE LIGHT *ABOVE*. MY PLAN
HAS *SUCCEEDED*...

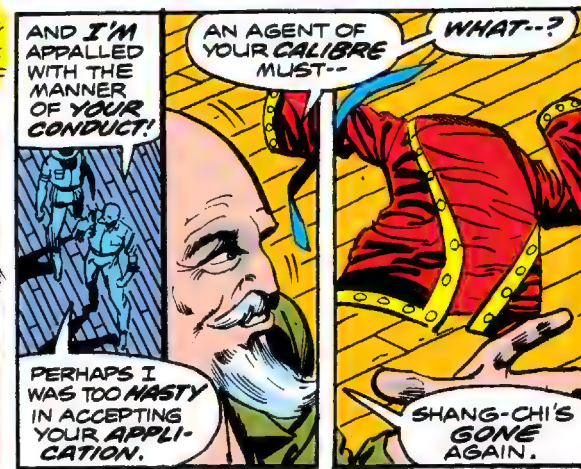
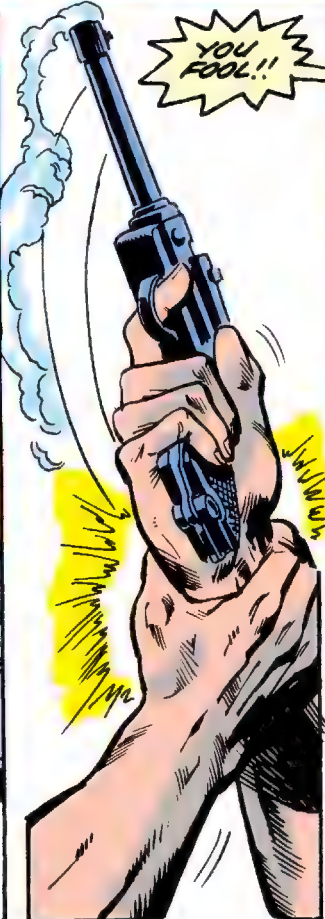
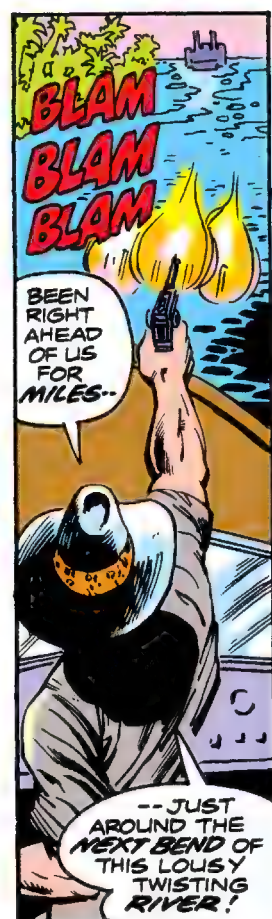
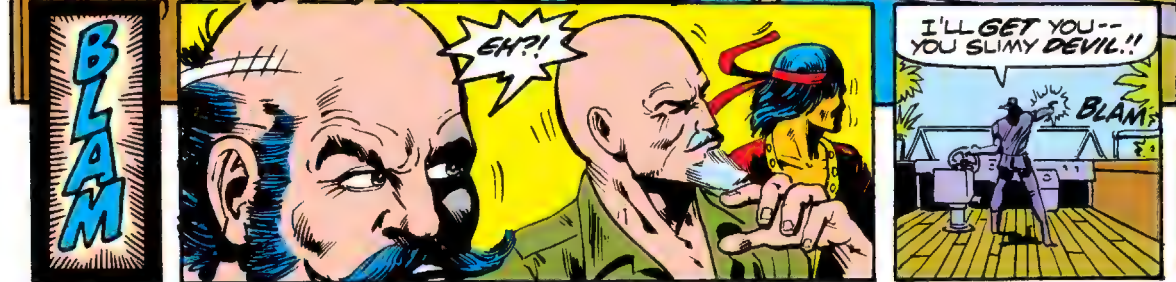
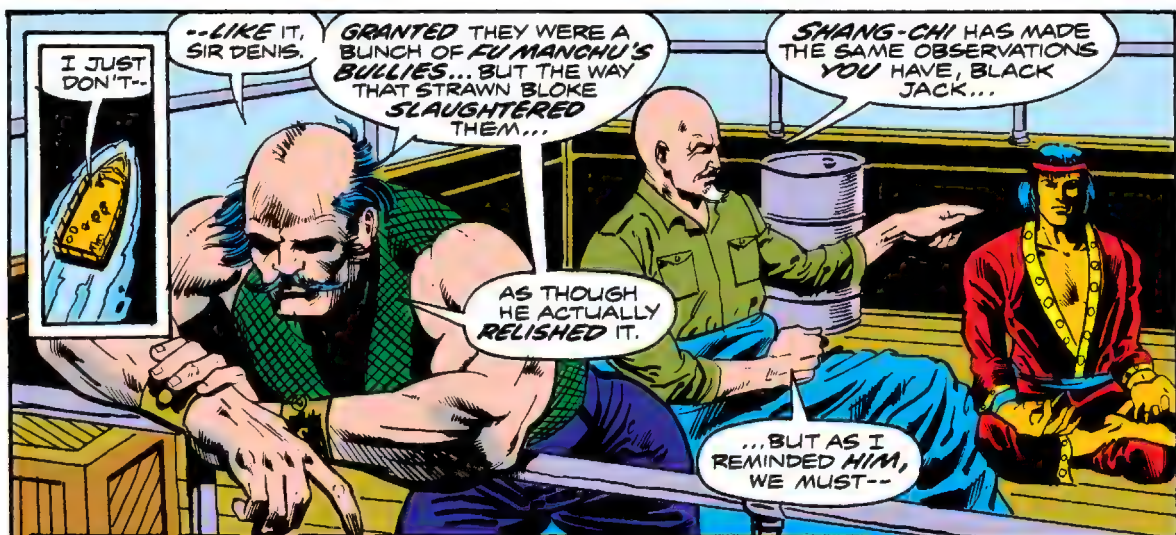


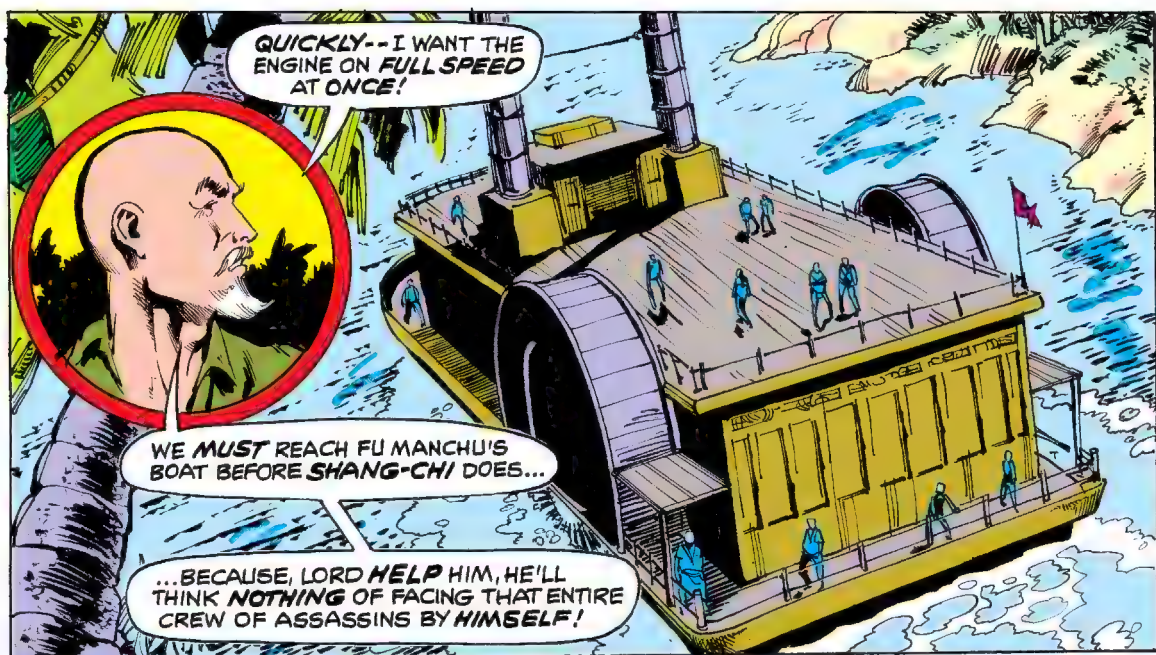
"...FORCING IT
TO EXPEL
PRECIOUS AIR.



"...FOR, UNABLE TO STOP THE
ALLIGATOR *UNDER WATER*, I HAVE
SOUGHT TO FORCE IT TO--







QUICKLY-- I WANT THE ENGINE ON FULL SPEED AT ONCE!

WE MUST REACH FU MANCHU'S BOAT BEFORE SHANG-CHI DOES...

... BECAUSE, LORD HELP HIM, HE'LL THINK *NOTHING* OF FACING THAT ENTIRE CREW OF ASSASSINS BY HIMSELF!

"MY BREATH PAINTS ITSELF IN BUBBLES GREETING AIR..."

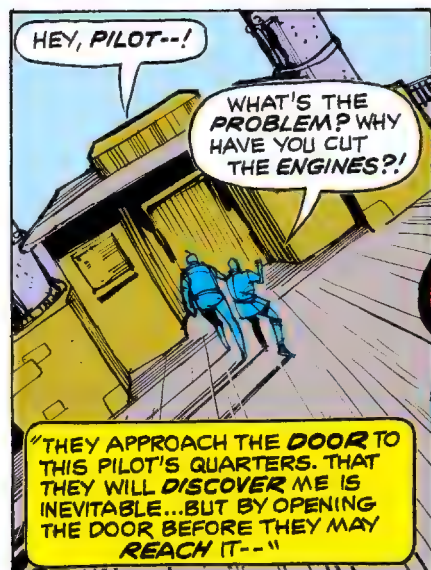
"...BUT MY PRESENCE IS NOT DISCOVERED."

-- SEVEN MORE MILES TO THE OUTPOST.

"...UNTIL..."

SWOK

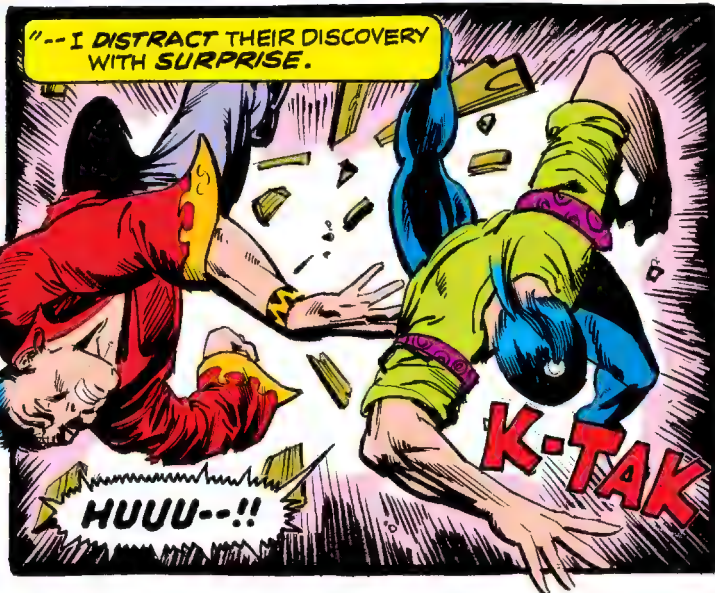
THE ENGINES--!



HEY, PILOT--!

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? WHY HAVE YOU CUT THE ENGINES?!

"THEY APPROACH THE DOOR TO THIS PILOT'S QUARTERS. THAT THEY WILL DISCOVER ME IS INEVITABLE...BUT BY OPENING THE DOOR BEFORE THEY MAY REACH IT--"



"-- I DISTRACT THEIR DISCOVERY WITH SURPRISE."

K-TAK

HUUU--!!

"I BURST THROUGH THE SHATTERED DOOR, LEAPING OVER THEIR SPRAWLED FORMS. THERE IS CONFUSION AS THE REMAINING SI-FAN GATHER TO CONFRONT ME..."

"...AND CONFUSION IS THE RESPONSE I HAVE SOUGHT."

IT IS SHANG CHI!!

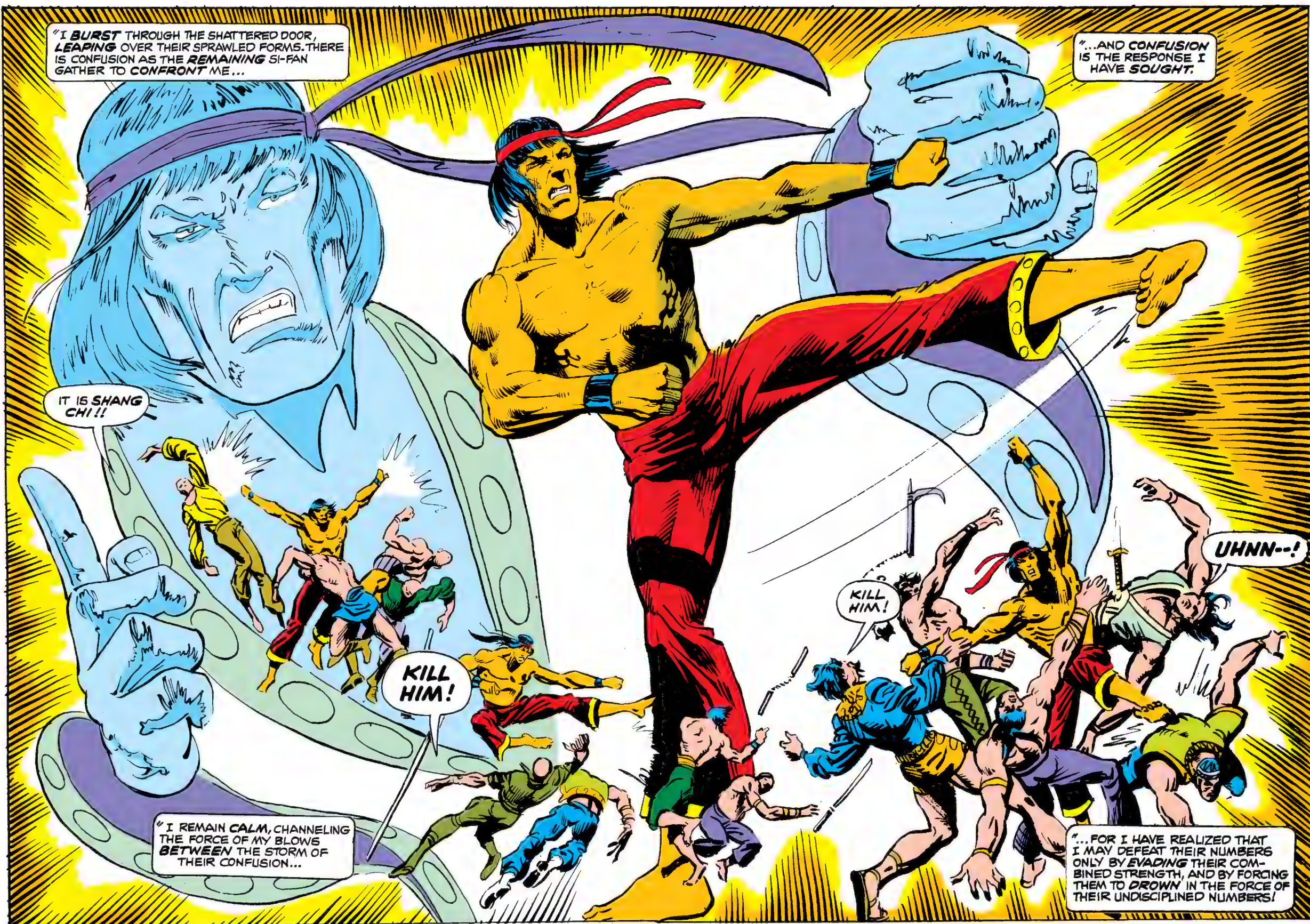
KILL HIM!

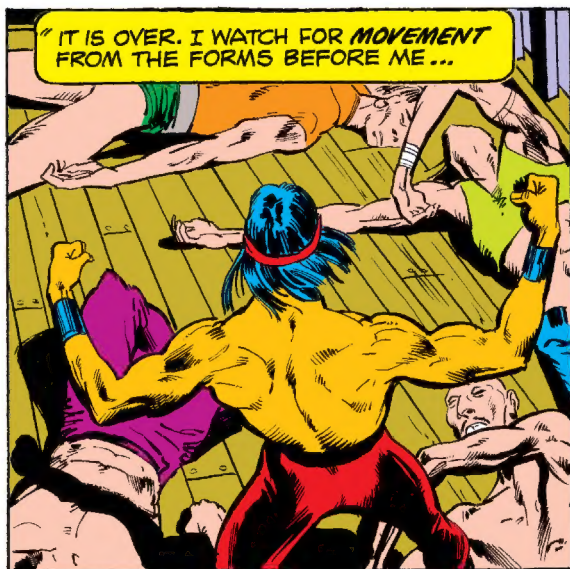
"I REMAIN CALM, CHANNELING THE FORCE OF MY BLOWS BETWEEN THE STORM OF THEIR CONFUSION..."

KILL HIM!

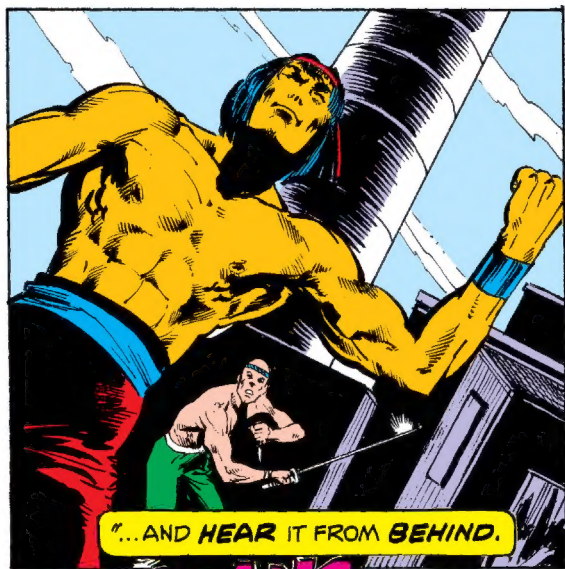
UHHN--!

"...FOR I HAVE REALIZED THAT I MAY DEFEAT THEIR NUMBERS ONLY BY EVADING THEIR COMBINED STRENGTH, AND BY FORCING THEM TO DROWN IN THE FORCE OF THEIR UNDISCIPLINED NUMBERS!"





"IT IS OVER. I WATCH FOR *MOVEMENT* FROM THE FORMS BEFORE ME...



"...AND HEAR IT FROM *BEHIND*."



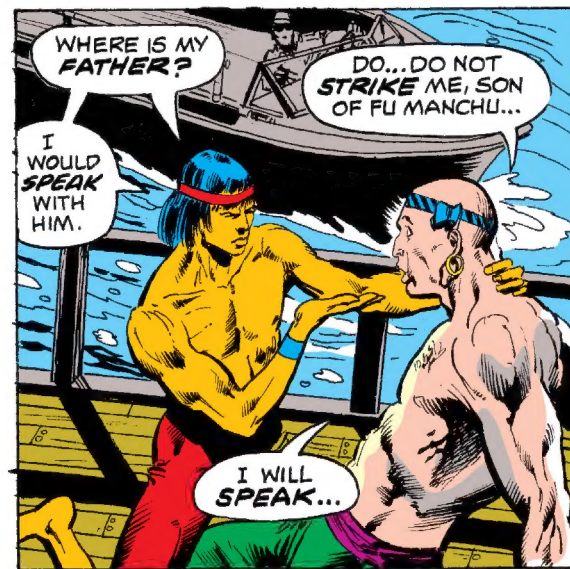
"HE IS THE *LAST* OF THEIR NUMBER."

WHISSSSSS.



CLANG

CLUMP

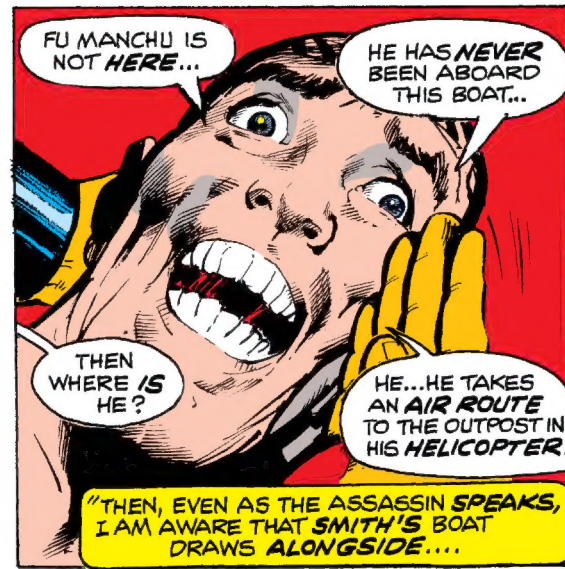


WHERE IS MY *FATHER*?

DO...DO NOT *STRIKE* ME, SON OF FU MANCHU...

I WOULD *SPEAK* WITH HIM.

I WILL *SPEAK*...



FU MANCHU IS NOT *HERE*...

HE HAS *NEVER* BEEN ABOARD THIS BOAT...

THEN WHERE *IS* HE?

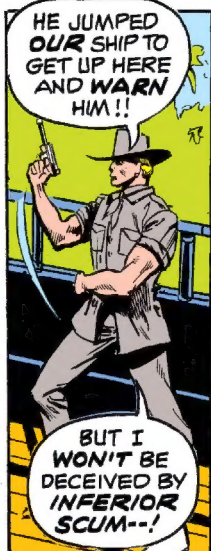
HE...HE TAKES AN *AIR ROUTE* TO THE OUTPOST IN HIS *HELICOPTER*.

"THEN, EVEN AS THE ASSASSIN SPEAKS, I AM AWARE THAT *SMITH'S BOAT* DRAWS *ALONGSIDE*..."



IT'S A LIE!!

THE CHINESE KID LET FU MANCHU ESCAPE!!



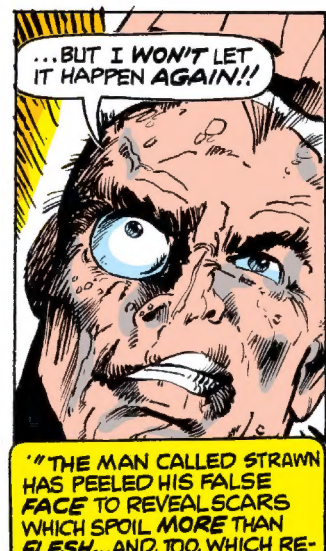
HE JUMPED OUR SHIP TO GET UP HERE AND WARN HIM!!

BUT I WON'T BE DECEIVED BY INFERIOR SCUM--!



IT HAPPENED ONCE--

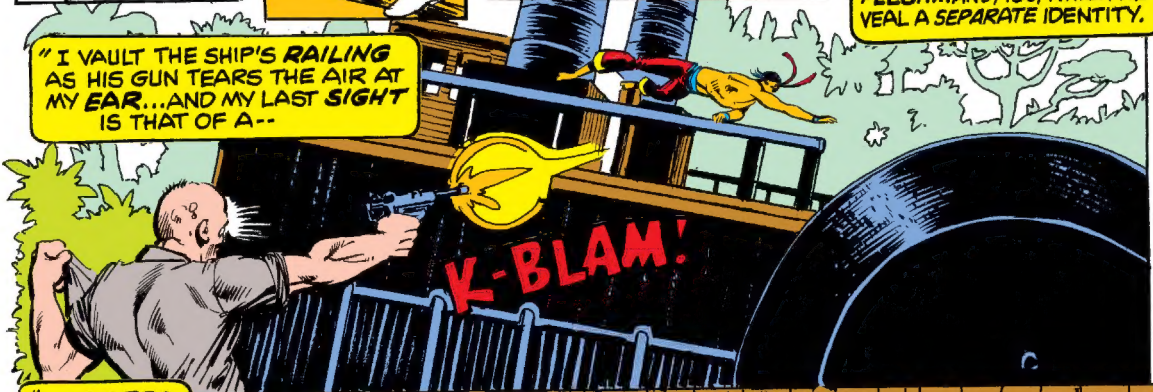
--IN A BOMBED-OUT BUNKER...



...BUT I WON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!!

"THE MAN CALLED STRAWN HAS PEELED HIS FALSE FACE TO REVEAL SCARS WHICH SPOIL MORE THAN FLESH...AND, TOO, WHICH REVEAL A SEPARATE IDENTITY.

"I VAULT THE SHIP'S RAILING AS HIS GUN TEARS THE AIR AT MY EAR...AND MY LAST SIGHT IS THAT OF A--



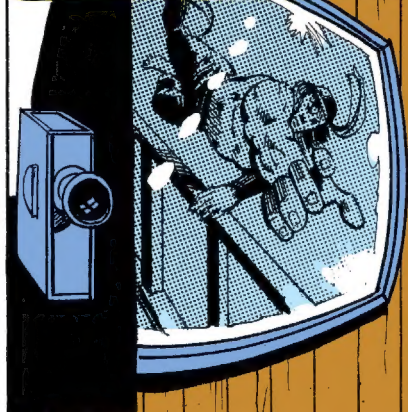
K-BLAM!

--CAMERA MOUNTED ON THE PILOT'S CABIN.

"I AM BEING OBSERVED FROM A DISTANCE...

"...UNTIL I LEAVE THE CAMERA'S SIGHT.

"I HEAR A SECOND EXPLOSION...



K-POW



"...AND FEEL PAIN...

"...BEFORE MEETING THE WATER.

SPLASH!

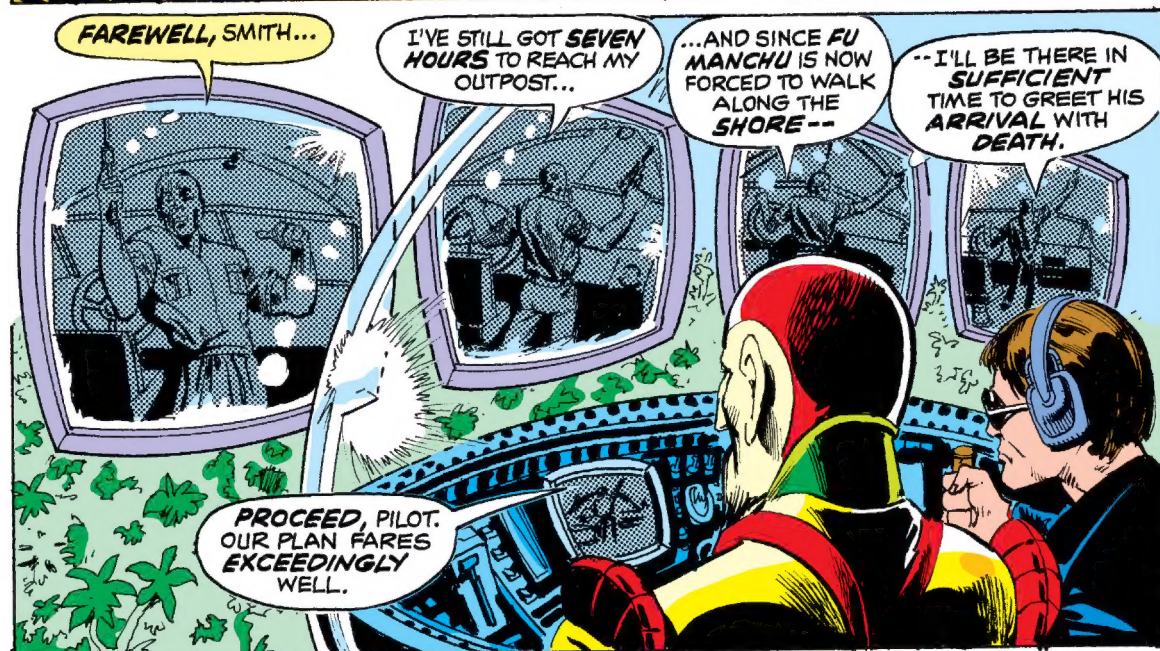




ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO--
ONTO THE OTHER **BOAT**.

YOU WERE A **FOOL**, SMITH...
ACCEPTING ME AS ONE OF
YOUR **AGENTS**...

DON'T BE A FOOL BY TRYING
TO **FOLLOW** ME. YOU'LL ONLY GET
IN THE **WAY**--AND I **REMOVE**
WHATEVER GETS IN MY WAY.



FAREWELL, SMITH...

I'VE STILL GOT **SEVEN**
HOURS TO REACH MY
OUTPOST...

...AND SINCE **FU**
MANCHU IS NOW
FORCED TO WALK
ALONG THE
SHORE--

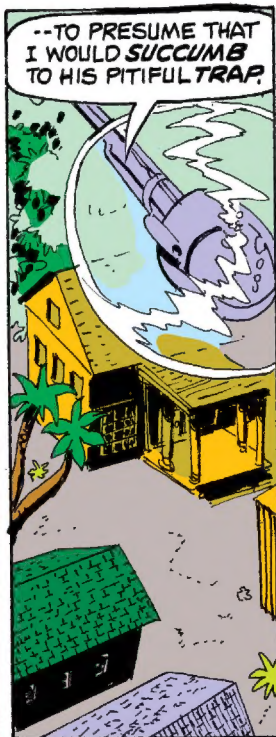
--I'LL BE THERE IN
SUFFICIENT
TIME TO GREET HIS
ARRIVAL WITH
DEATH.

PROCEED, PILOT.
OUR PLAN FARES
EXCEEDINGLY
WELL.

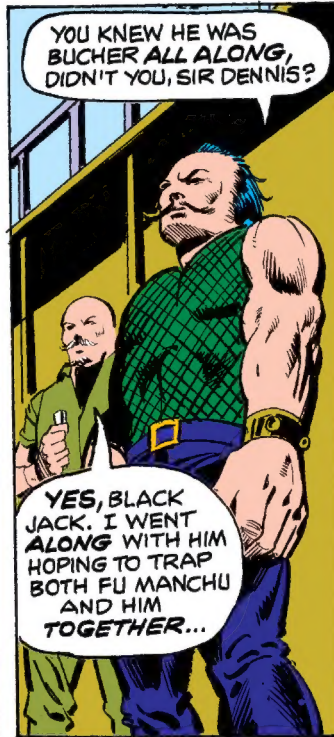


BUCHER WAS A
FOOL TO THINK I
WOULD FORM AN
ALLIANCE WITH
ANY MAN...

...AND HE IS
AN EVEN
GREATER
FOOL--

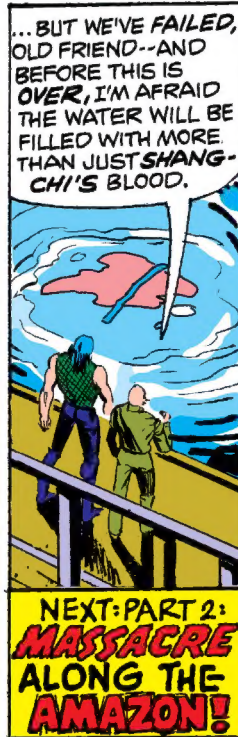


--TO PRESUME THAT
I WOULD **SUCCUMB**
TO HIS PITIFUL **TRAP**



YOU KNEW HE WAS
BUCHER ALL ALONG,
DIDN'T YOU, SIR DENNIS?

YES, BLACK
JACK. I WENT
ALONG WITH HIM
HOPING TO TRAP
BOTH **FU** **MANCHU**
AND HIM
TOGETHER...



...BUT WE'VE FAILED,
OLD FRIEND--AND
BEFORE THIS IS
OVER, I'M AFRAID
THE WATER WILL BE
FILLED WITH MORE
THAN JUST **SHANG-
CHI'S** BLOOD.

NEXT: PART 2:
MASSACRE
ALONG THE
AMAZON!

Shadowcat

